

Sidrabene's Future Directions 2016 Survey summary results

'A little piece of heaven on earth'

September, 2016

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1. Background:

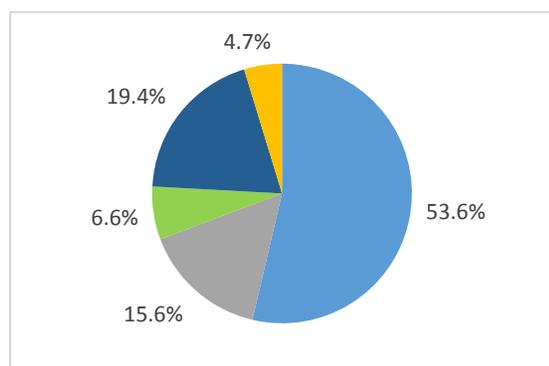
The purpose of the survey is to better understand the future needs of Sidrabene's key stakeholders in order to guide the planning of future programs and initiatives. It was sponsored jointly by the St. Andrew's Ev. Lutheran Latvian Church council and Sidrabene's 'pārvalde'.

The survey was available for completion between May 12th to August 31st, 2016. In total, 211 responses were submitted: 178 were submitted electronically and 33 in paper form. The survey was available in English (electronically and in paper form) and in Latvian (paper form only). It included 24 questions. Five duplicate responses were deleted.

The survey was publicized through the St. Andrew's Church newsletter, bulletin board, website and through two e-mails to 230 members who have known addresses. A link to the survey was sent electronically to all Sidrabene cottagers, recipients of Hamilton 'Ziņas', LNJAK members, 'Dižais Dancis' members, Sidrabene campers, and Latvian School Hamilton families. A link to the survey was shared on Facebook through NakotneTO, SID Nometne, and several personal Facebook pages. An article about the survey appeared in 'Latvija Amerikā' and information about the survey was posted on the Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre's bulletin board. Paper copies of the survey were available at St. Andrew's Church, at the gate at Sidrabene, and at a number of social events. Cards reminders about the survey were handed out at the gate at Sidrabene.

2. Who responded to the survey:

All Toronto area Latvian-Canadians were encouraged to reply to the survey. The largest group that responded were 113 members of St. Andrew's Church (53.6% of respondents). In addition to the groups listed below, another large group was the 82 respondents who indicated that they or their family have a cottage at Sidrabene (38.9% of respondents). There is an overlap of 55 responders who are both members of St. Andrew's Church and cottagers, but the cottager group also includes members of the Hamilton Church and family members who do not belong to a Latvian congregation.



Survey respondents	#	%
Members of St. Andrew's Ev. Lutheran Latvian congregation (<i>based on a membership of approximately 650, this represents a response rate of 17.4%</i>)	113	53.6
Members of the Hamilton Ev. Lutheran Latvian congregation	33	15.6
Members of another Latvian congregation in Toronto	14	6.6
Members of the Latvian community who do not belong to a Latvian congregation	41	19.4
Other: people from elsewhere in Ontario or Latvia or not stated	10	4.7

Seventy-seven responders (36.5%) were male, 131 (62.1%) were female and 1.4% of responders did not specify. In terms of age groups, the breakdown was as follows:

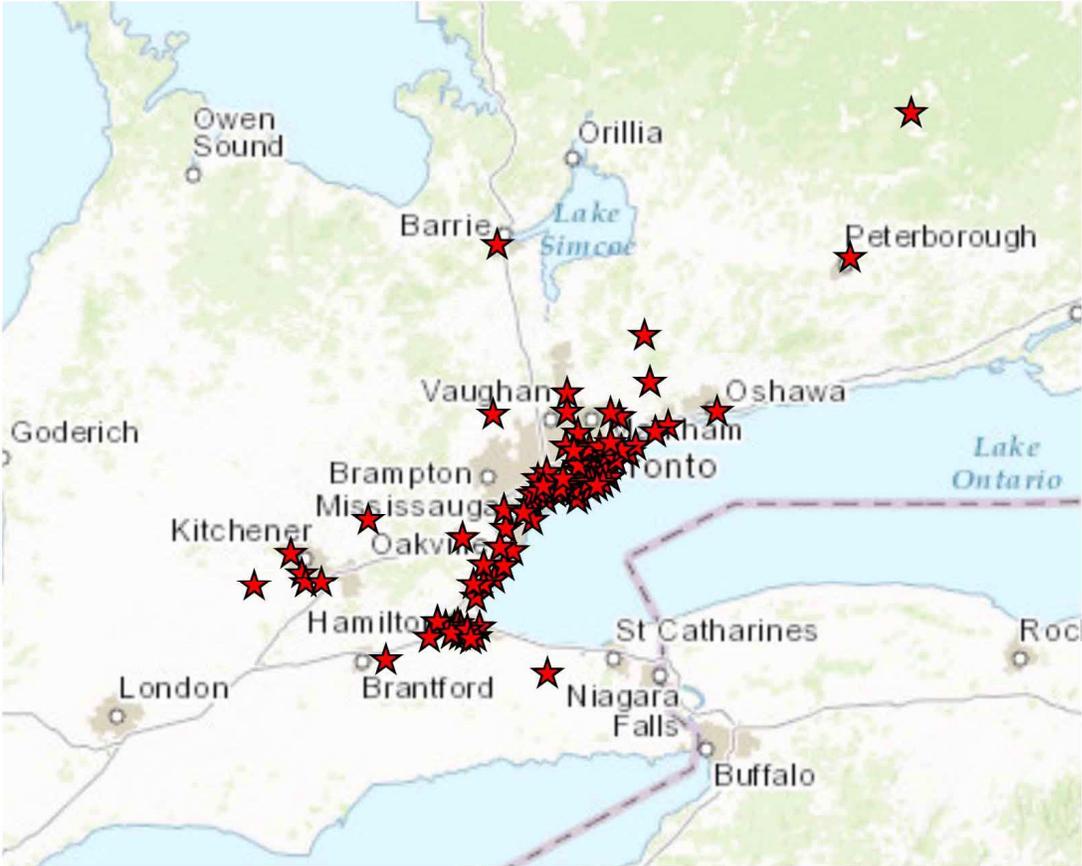
Age group	#	%
16 or under	15	7.1
17 to 25	13	6.2
26 to 40	31	14.7
41 to 60	71	33.6
61 to 80	68	32.2
81 and older	13	6.2

With regards to language, 85.3% of responders said they speak and understand Latvian, 7.1% said they understand Latvian, and 7.1% said they neither understand or speak Latvian.

In terms of familiarity with Sidrabene, responders reported the number of times they visited Sidrabene during 2015 as follows:

Number of visits	#	%
Never	20	9.5
1 to 3 times	65	30.8
4 to 10 times	62	29.4
More than 10 times	64	30.3

Responders were asked to indicate the first three letters of their postal code in order that we could determine the geographic distribution of our community. The following map indicates the geographic distribution of the great majority of Ontario responders:



3. Rating the importance of the components of the Sidrabene experience:

Summary

In order to identify priorities for future planning, the survey asked responders to rate the importance of six components of the Sidrabene experience on a 6-point scale ranging from *not at all important (1)* to *extremely important (6)*. The questions about the six components were the following:

- *How important to you is Sidrabene as a religious/spiritual retreat?*
- *How important do you think Sidrabene's children's summer camp is to the Latvian-Canadian community?*
- *How important is Sidrabene's children's camp to your family?*
- *How important to you are Sidrabene's cultural activities?*
- *How important to you are Sidrabene's social activities?*
- *How important to you is the availability of sports facilities in Sidrabene?*

For summary purposes, the ratings are presented as the percentage that were 'important' i.e. rated as 4, 5 or 6 on the scale. More detailed analysis is included below for each component.

The overall results are summarized below for the full sample (211), members of St. Andrew's church (113), members of St. Andrew's church who are not cottagers (58) and cottagers (82):

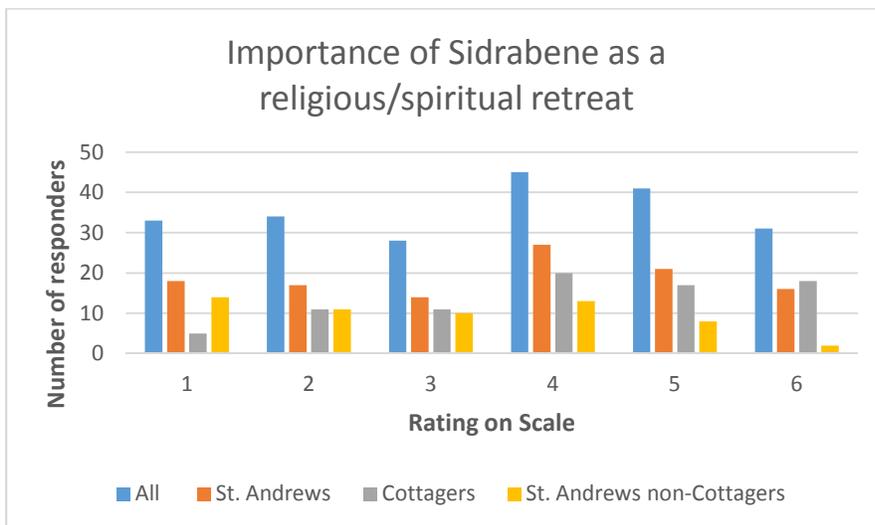
	Percentage who rated as 'important'			
	Full Sample	St. Andrew's church- all	Cottagers	St. Andrew's non-cottagers
Religious/spiritual retreat	55.0%	56.6%	67.1%	39.7%
Summer camp to community	84.4%	82.3%	89.0%	79.3%
Summer camp to own family	54.5%	53.1%	75.6%	36.2%
Cultural activities	83.4%	77.9%	86.6%	72.4%
Social activities	70.1%	65.5%	82.9%	51.7%
Sports facilities	72.5%	67.3%	87.8%	51.7%

The Table below presents the overall results by age group:

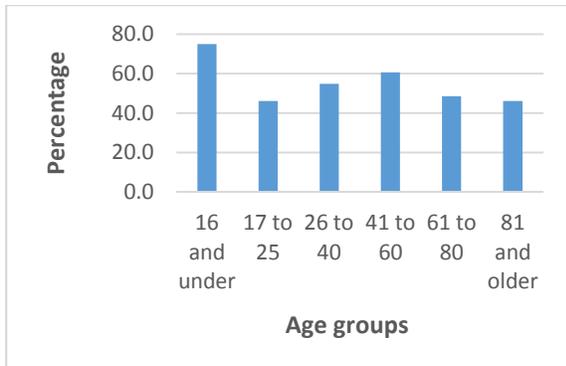
	Percentage who rated as 'important'					
	16 or under	17 to 25	26 to 40	41 to 60	61 to 80	81 and over
Religious/spiritual retreat	73.3%	46.2%	54.8%	60.6%	48.5%	46.2%
Summer camp to community	100.0%	84.6%	93.5%	77.5%	83.8%	84.6%
Summer camp to own family	93.3%	76.9%	71.0%	49.3%	42.6%	38.5%
Cultural activities	80.0%	76.9%	90.3%	84.5%	82.4%	76.9%
Social activities	100.0%	84.6%	80.6%	66.2%	63.2%	53.8%
Sports facilities	100.0%	92.3%	96.8%	76.1%	54.4%	46.2%

a) The importance of Sidrabene as a religious/spiritual retreat

This component was rated as 'important' by 55% of the full sample, 56.6% of the members of St. Andrew's Church, 67.1% of the cottagers and 39.7% by members of St. Andrew's Church who are not cottagers. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 1):



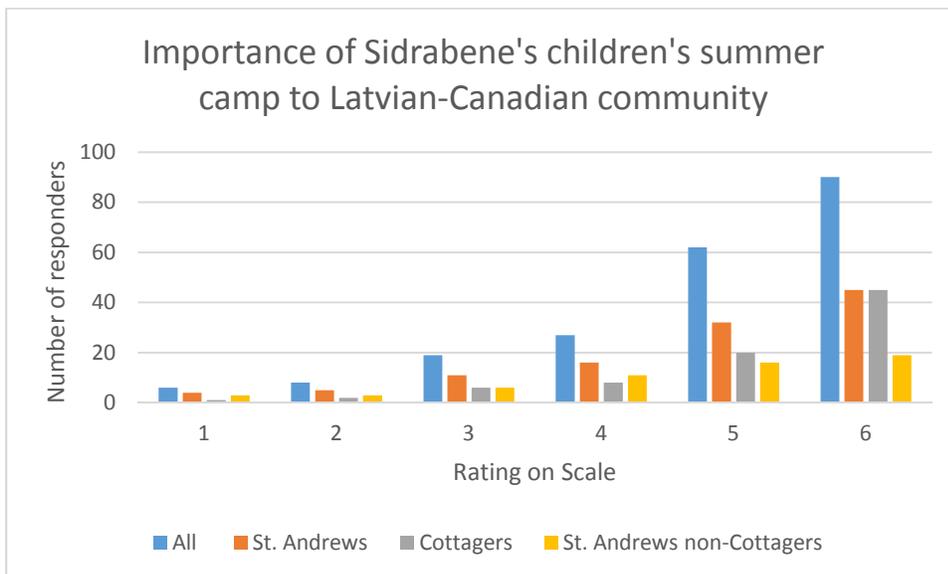
By age group, the highest ratings of importance were by responders aged 16 or under at 73.3% and the lowest were by responders 81 and older at 46.2%.



Within the full sample, 53.4% of women and 55.8% of men rated this component as 'important'.

b) The importance of Sidrabene's children's summer camp to the Latvian-Canadian community

This component was rated as 'important' by all groups: 84.4% by the full sample, 82.3% by the members of St. Andrew's Church, 89.0% by cottagers and 79.3% by members of St. Andrew's Church who are not cottagers; in fact, this component was rated the most highly of the six components. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 2):



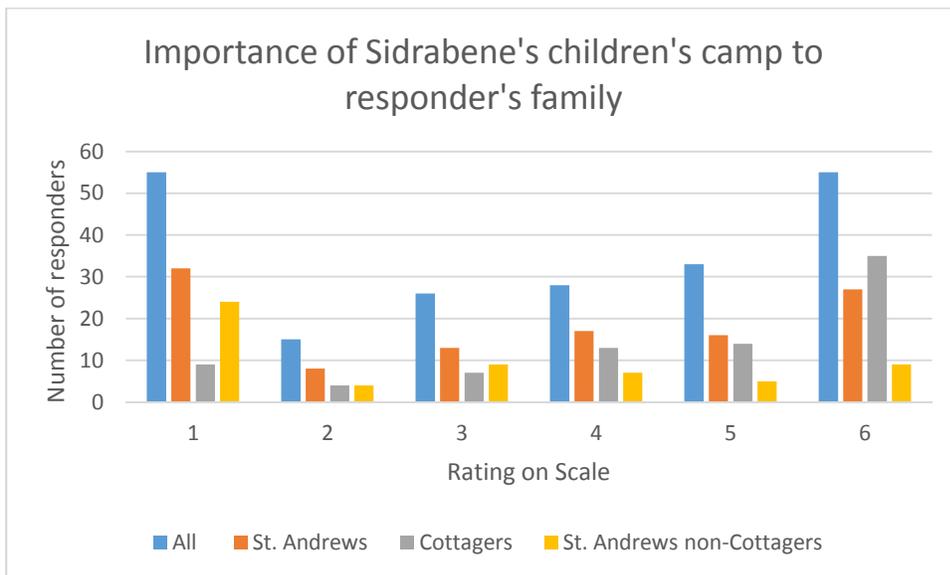
By age group, the highest ratings of importance were by responders aged 16 or under at 100% and the lowest were by responders aged 41 to 60 at 77.5%.

This question was phrased to solicit input regarding the importance of the camp to the entire Latvian-Canadian community versus the next question that asks about the importance to the responder’s family, which may depend on whether the responder has children or grandchildren who are of an age to be attending the camp.

This issue elicited a large number of comments in response to the question “what would you like to see done differently or improved at Sidrabene”. Many responders felt that a return should be made to the founding fathers’ vision for a ‘Latvian-centred’ camp, that more Latvian needs to be heard at the camp for it to be called ‘Latvian’, that being a Latvian camp should be its draw when competing with countless specialized camps with better facilities and activities. As for the Latvian community, there is no other Latvian quality children’s camp near Toronto. It was recommended that the community support the camp wholeheartedly or not at all and not allow its facilities to fall into disrepair as at present. It was suggested that better advertising would result in more participants. Closer ties to camp leaders in Latvia were suggested. It was suggested that there be less overlap with Saulaine’s camp weeks or more visits back and forth. The opposite view was also expressed – that the camp should be opened to the general public, and that the exclusivity combination of religion and language was destroying it.

c) The importance of Sidrabene’s children’s summer camp to the responder’s family

This component received ratings as important by 54.5% of the full sample, 53.1% of the members of St. Andrew’s Church, 75.6% by cottagers and 36.2% by members of St. Andrew’s Church who are not cottagers. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 3):

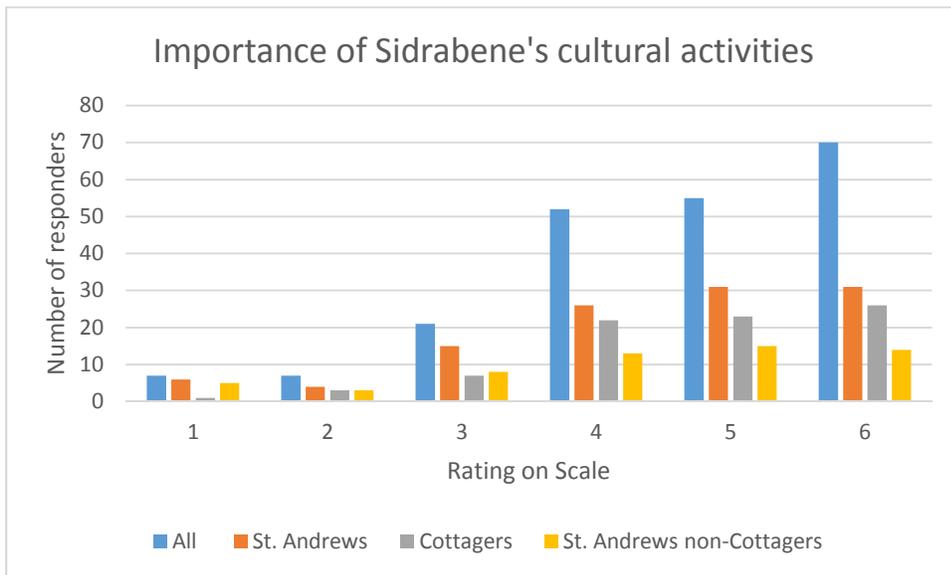


By age group, the highest ratings of importance were again by responders aged 16 or under at 93.3% and the lowest were by those aged 81 and over at 38.5%.

The difference in ratings to this component compared to the previous one likely reflect whether the responder has children or grandchildren of an age to attend the children’s summer camp.

d) The importance of Sidrabene’s cultural activities (e.g. Latvian music, art, theatre)

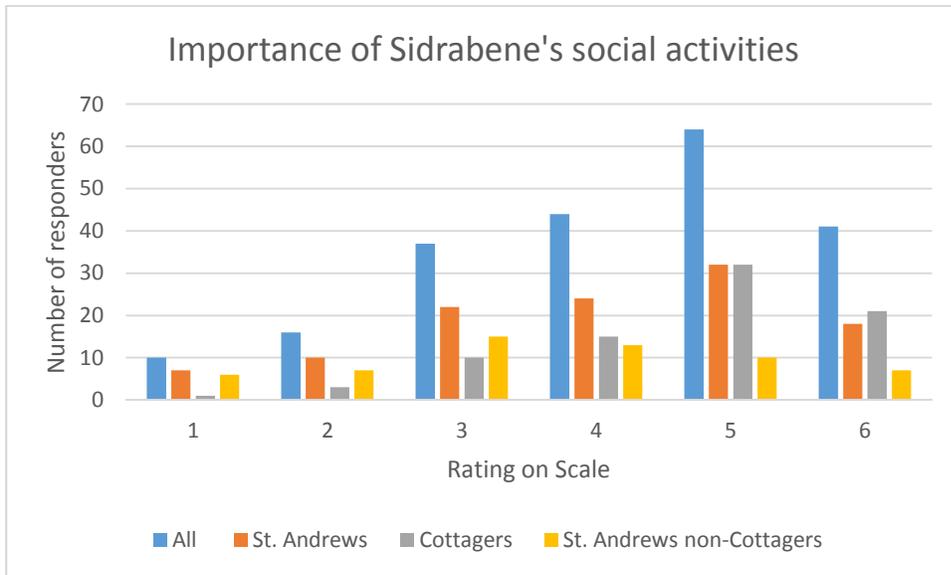
This component received high ratings of important across all groups: 83.4% by the full sample, 77.9% of the members of St. Andrew’s Church, 86.6% by cottagers and 72.4% by members of St. Andrew’s Church who are not cottagers. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 4):



By age group, the highest ratings of importance were by responders aged 26 to 40 at 90.3% and the lowest were by responders 17 to 25 as well as those 81 and over at 76.9%.

e) The importance of Sidrabene's social activities (e.g. opening and closing events, dinner evenings at the Café, ribfest)

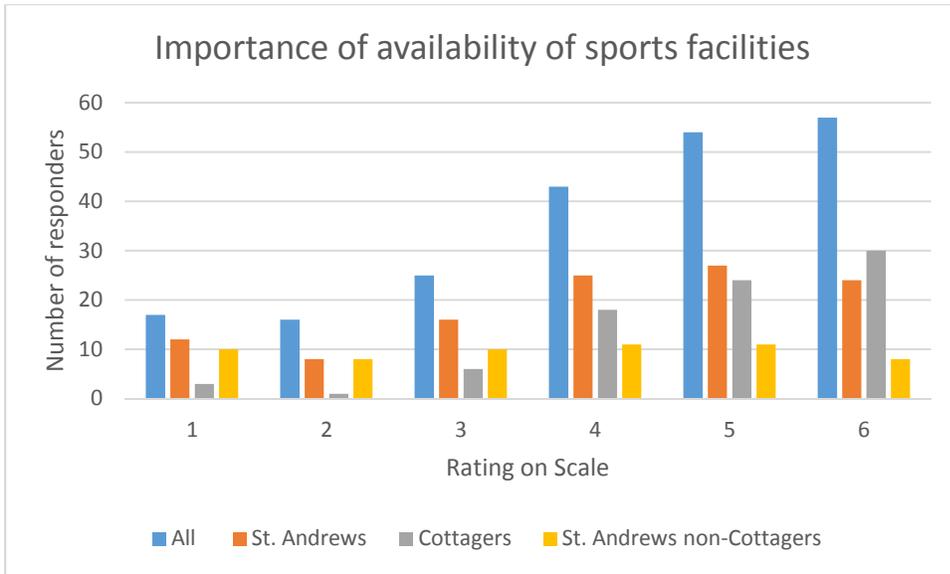
This component received ratings of important by 70.1% by the full sample, 65.5% by the members of St. Andrew's Church, 82.9% by cottagers and 51.7% by members of St. Andrew's Church who are not cottagers. Cottagers likely rated this component higher than members of St. Andrew's church as these events are more readily accessible to them although other participants are welcome to attend. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 5):



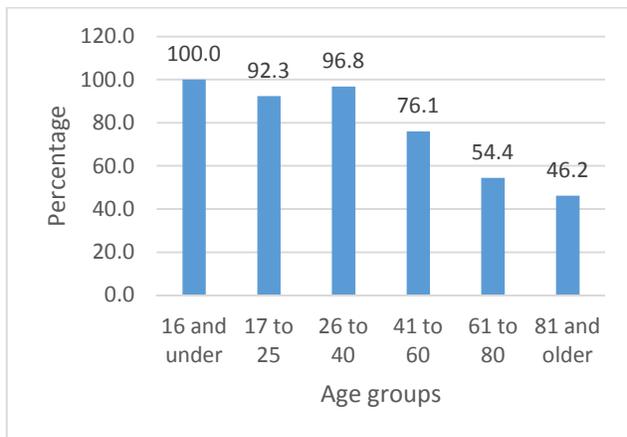
By age group, the highest ratings of importance were by responders aged 16 or under at 100% and then decreasing by age group to a rating of importance of 53.8% by those aged 81 and over.

f) The importance of the availability of sports facilities in Sidrabene (e.g. pool, basketball court, volleyball court).

This component received a rating as important by 72.5% of the full sample, 67.3% of the members of St. Andrew’s Church, 87.8% by cottagers and 51.7% by members of St. Andrew’s Church who are not cottagers. The more detailed ratings on the six-point scale are presented for these four groups below (see Appendix 6):



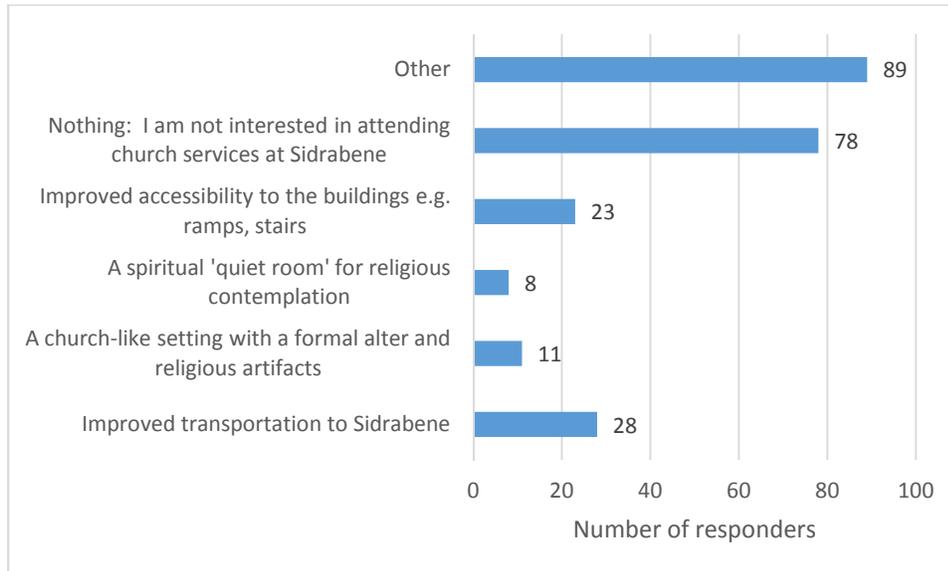
100% of respondents aged 16 or under rated this component as important. This percentage drops by age group down to 46.2% for responders aged 81 or older.



74.0% of women and 71.4% of men rates this component as important.

4. Attendance at Church services year around:

Responders were asked what would encourage them to attend St. Andrew's Church services and family events in Sidrabene all year around on the first Sunday of every month and more often during the children's summer camp. More than one response was permitted and there was an option to add further comments under 'other'. The responses were as follows:

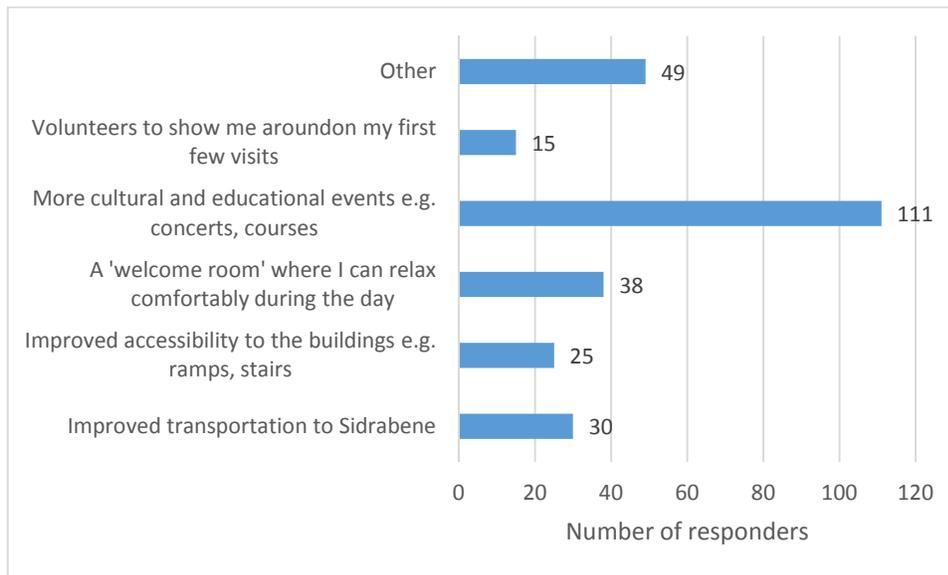


The comments under 'other' included the following:

- More than 20 responders said they already attend and like the services as they are.
- 7 responders indicated that distance was a problem; 4 said that they could not travel to Sidrabene in the winter; and 5 cannot attend due to their scheduling and availability issues.
- 7 responders said they would like more notifications and reminders.
- 9 responders asked for an integration of other activities after the service, such as a post-lunch discussion group, a lecture, a book talk, classes (cooking, pottery), theatre group, and outdoor activities.
- 3 responders asked for more activities for children.
- 5 responders asked for free parking in order to attend services.
- 2 responders said they did not want church services to be moved to Sidrabene.
- Other recommendations made by individual responders included: more involvement with cottagers, better bathrooms, more exciting services, ecumenical services, and an approach for all Latvian congregations to meet together and travel to each other's locations for services.

5. What would make Sidrabene more pleasant and welcoming:

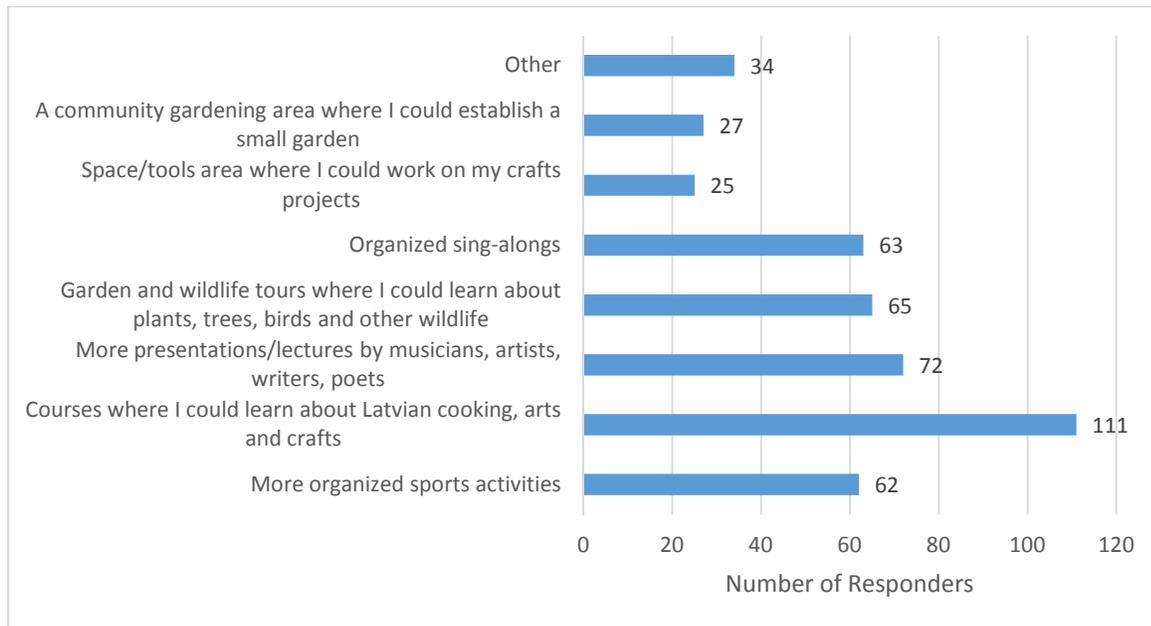
Responders were asked what would make Sidrabene more pleasant and welcoming to them. More than one response was permitted and there was an option to add further comments under 'other'. The responses were as follows:



The comments under 'other' included the following:

- A number of responders indicated that everything was already the way they like it.
- In terms of cultural and educational events, suggestions were made to focus on the Latvian side of things; include activities such as weaving, jewelry making, and storytelling; to celebrate traditions as they are celebrated in Latvia today, not 50 years ago; to offer beginner Latvian language courses to help integrate those with poorer language skills; to offer new activities, in addition to the ones we have been doing for years; special events for seniors, adults, children, women, and couples.
- Individual responders suggested improving trails and paths through the forested area, better roads, better washrooms, promoting camping, a beer garden, free parking, and no astronomical entrance fees like for 'Jāņi', better marketing and advertising; and less gossip and sharing of opinions. Two responders requested for less organized activity and more quiet.
- 2 responders suggested better rental accommodations.
- 2 responders noted that they would like fewer uninvited guests and stressed the importance of ongoing security/vigilance regarding outsiders so that kids can 'roam free'.
- 2 responders requested better signage (at the gate or online) regarding areas being rented and off limits; this information would assist them in determining when to come to Sidrabene.
- One responder felt that he would like to be welcomed even though he is not a 'sidrabeniētis'.

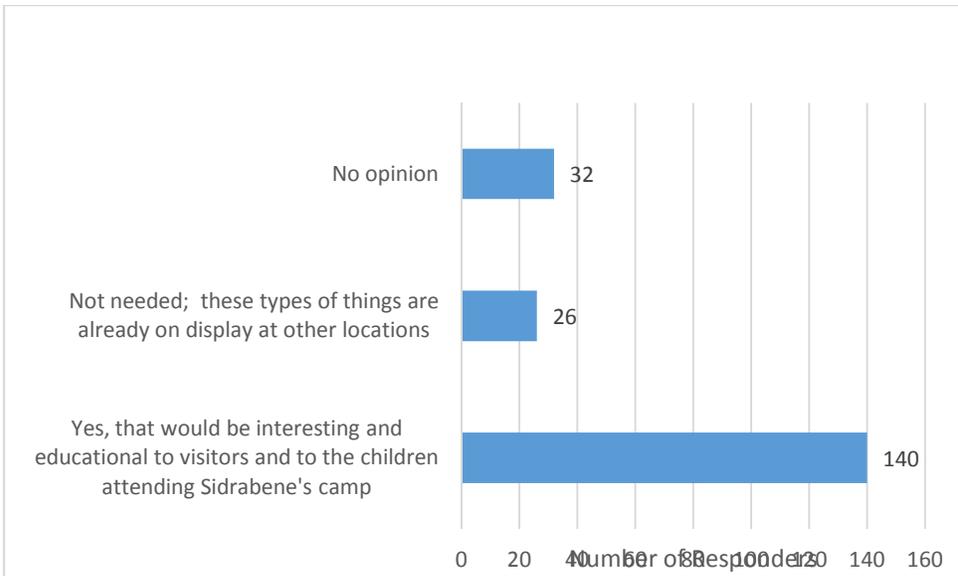
A follow-up question asked what kinds of social and cultural activities would encourage responders to visit Sidrabene more often. More than one response was permitted and there was an option to add further comments under 'other'. The responses were as follows:



The comments under 'other' included the following:

- 3 responders suggested for more activities geared to children/youth.
- 2 responders asked for more drinking events.
- Individual responders suggested informational events about the local ecosystem; an adult volleyball tournament; a yoga/meditation retreat; fitness classes; Latvian movie nights; arts and crafts sales; live music; dances, novus/zole tournaments/instruction; zolite games; plays, concerts and political lectures; reunions for confirmation classes, fishing courses.
- Individual responders suggested free parking, better notification of activities, more free and informal hands-on get togethers, and rooms for private and group retreats.
- One responder suggested that we have a Pot Luck street party at Sidrabene and invite all the neighbours...after 60 plus years we do not know many of them.

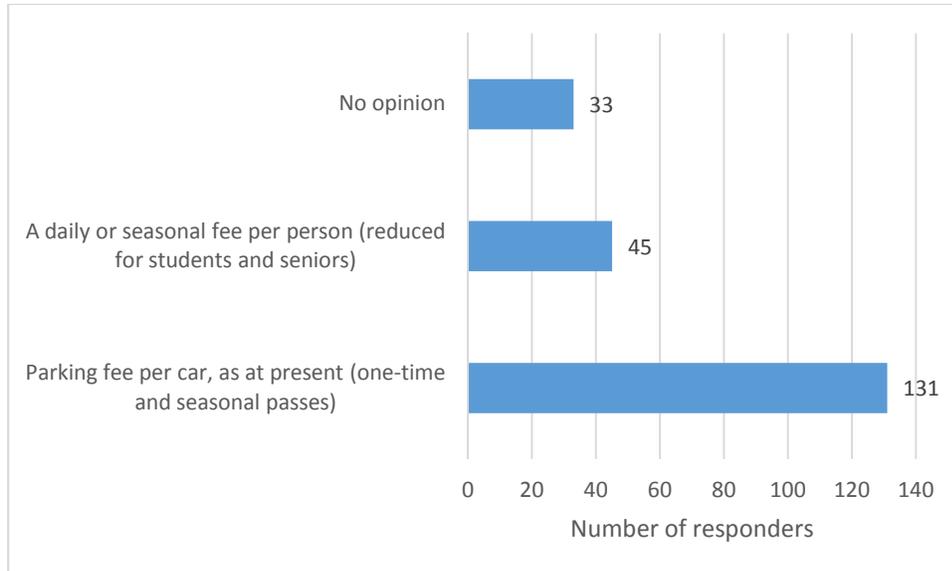
A question was also asked about whether responders would be interested in having a display area for Latvian arts (e.g. weaving, knitting, spinning, jeweler, wood carving, pottery, stained glass) and Sidrabene's historic photographs. The responses were as follows:



Other comments were that the display should focus on photographs and Sidrabene’s history only, that the display should be simple and not of monetary value, not affected by winter weather conditions and that the display be housed in the Café.

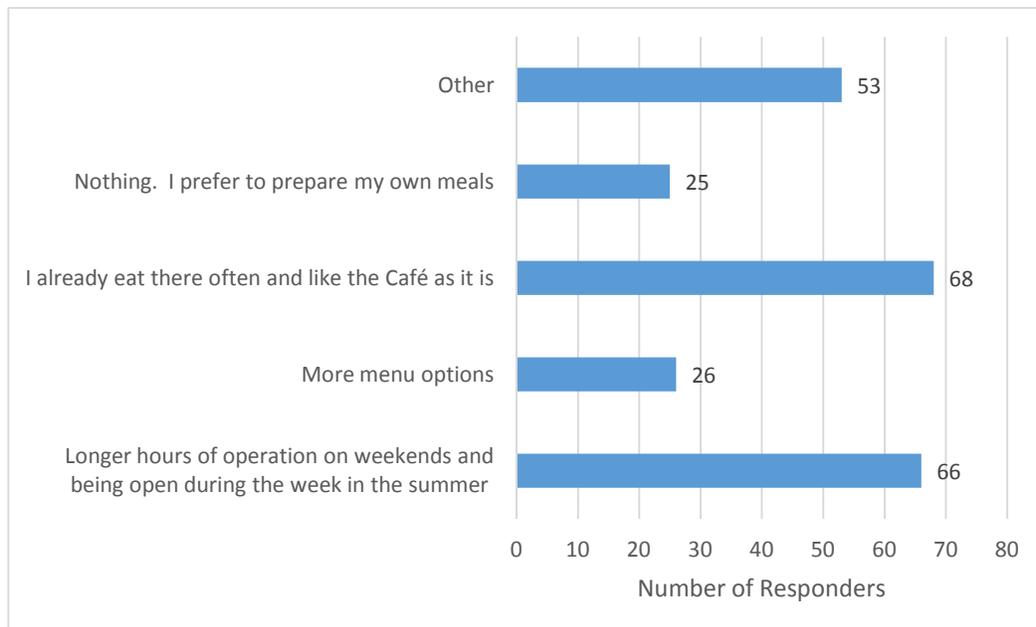
6. Paying for entry to Sidrabene:

Responders were asked how people should pay for entry. Only three responses were permitted. The responses were as follows:



7. Encouraging more use of the Café:

Responders were asked what would encourage them to eat more often at the Café. More than one response was permitted and there was an option to add further comments under 'other'. The responses were as follows:

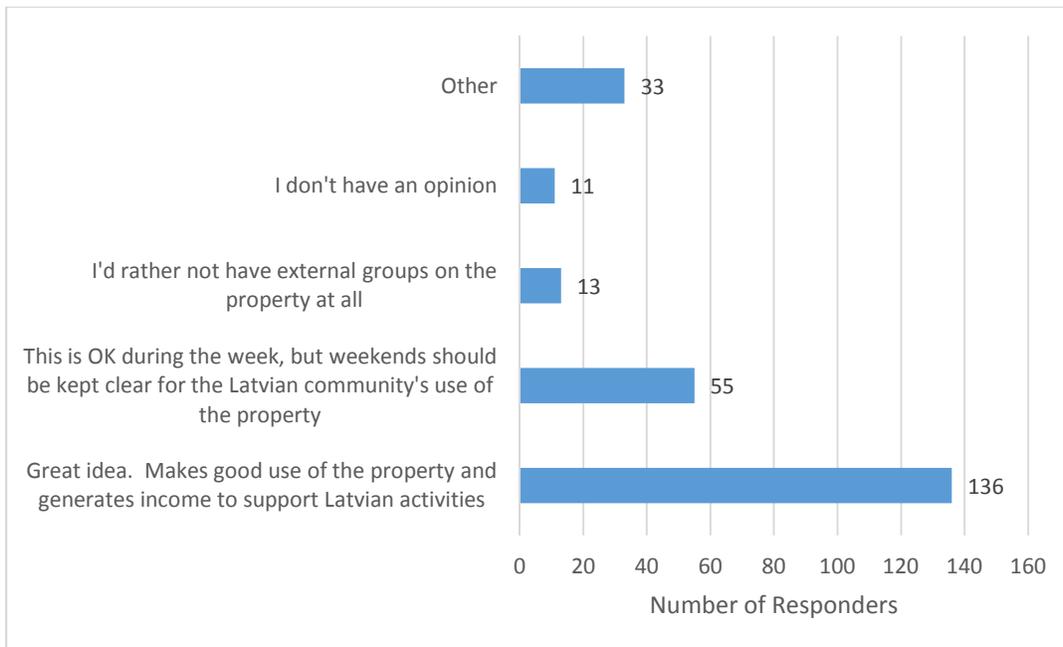


The comments under 'other' included the following:

- 5 responders recommended better advertising of when the Café is open, what food are available, the 'specials' and their prices. This could be done on a Facebook page and/or a notice board at the Café.
- A number of responders would like to see the Café not run out of food on special occasions/large events; have free parking when eating at the Café; and a need for better service and a shorter wait time for food.
- Individual responders mentioned the need for the menu to be in English and to have a tie in between the Café and cultural activities; to be open on Wednesday evenings during camp weeks when church services are held.
- Many suggestions were made for menu items including: more vegetarian/vegan options; simple quick cheap snacks such as perogies, fries with gravy, onion rings; a simpler menu of cold foods such as potato salad and rice; all day breakfast; wings, Korean short ribs, ribs; soups; desserts, cakes, 'saldās maizīte, sweets and piragi to go with coffee; a more Latvian cuisine; fewer Latvian related foods; a revival of the old 'veikals' type of products such as candies and other goodies; a beer garden.

8. Sidrabene renting its facilities to other groups:

Responders were asked their views on Sidrabene renting its facilities to other groups in order to support operations. More than one response was permitted and there was an option to add further comments under 'other'. The responses were as follows:



The comments under 'other' generally accepted that the rental of Sidrabene's facilities was necessary to support operations, but included the following suggestions:

- Rentals should only be to Latvians, or at least preference should be given to Latvian groups.
- Rentals should be kept to a minimum as Sidrabene is for Latvians. It was also said that if Latvians used Sidrabene more, outside rentals would not be required. A suggestion to connect with other immigrant groups was made.
- it is advisable to rent only to groups that we know will not abuse the property; users should have clear guidelines regarding the boundaries and limitations of their rentals; the Halton School Board, other school groups, and scouts are generally viewed favourably. A recent rental was viewed negatively as the group stayed longer than expected, left garbage behind.
- Comments were made that rentals should not take place on summer weekends, that rentals should not take precedence over public pool times, and that pool availability times should be consistent for all camps and outside groups.
- For facility rentals to be competitive, they need to be upgraded, including better heating in the winter.
- There was concern that non-Latvian renters would become drawn to Sidrabene, consider it a park and show up outside of their event times.
- One responder stated that he "liked that everyone was a familiar face, now it seems there are more and more strangers on the property". Another said that he did not enjoy seeing other camps and groups in Sidrabene that do not support and embrace Latvian culture and do not respect our land.
- It was suggested that a listing of rentals be made available to cottagers so that they know what is going on.

9. What people like best about Sidrabene:

Responses to this question were offered by over 150 responders and they are provided verbatim in Appendix 7. The primary themes that emerged are different than the six components of the Sidrabene experience rated earlier; they focused on nature and peacefulness; community, fellowship and 'family'; safety and memories. A sample of responses is provided below, including a number drawn from the 'any other comments' section:

Nature and peacefulness

- *Absolutely gorgeous natural setting.*
- *Trees, hidden away quiet places.*
- *An oasis from the busy and fast-paced world.*
- *A little piece of heaven on earth.*
- *I get to enjoy God's creation every day I'm here.*
- *'Sidrabene ir brīnišķīga vieta. Grūti iedomāties vasaru bez vismaz pāris dienām pavadītas viņas zaļumos.'*

Community, fellowship and ‘family’

- *It is such a welcoming place where everyone is included in the community.*
- *The welcoming community atmosphere means that there’s nearly always something to do or someone to talk to.*
- *Everyone here is like one big family, everyone knows everyone and gets along with everyone. There is hardly a time when I am at Sid that I don’t see someone I enjoy talking to.*
- *I come back every year to my second family.*
- *I love the community and the people I have met and grown up with. It’s like an extra big family.*
- *It’s like a little Latvian village.*
- *Always a friendly face at the gate.*
- *Sidrabene is a hub at which Latvians and friends can meet to pass a leisurely day and be free to enjoy nature, relaxing and socializing. I cannot imagine Sidrabene not existing.*

Safety

- *So much space for kids to just go crazy all over Sid.*
- *I can just do whatever I want without feeling frightened.*
- *Sidrabene feels very safe but very lively at the same time.*
- *Kids today don’t typically get to experience freedom in a natural setting like we could in the past*
- Sid is a fantastic place for this.
- *I feel that my kids can run around safely and I give them more freedom at Sidrabene than anywhere to explore and have fun in nature.*

Memories

- *As a former camper, Sidrabene shaped who I became as an adult. The memories are priceless.*
- *Man vislabāk patīk bērnu nometne un aizgājušā jaunība Sidrabenē.*

10. What people would like to see done differently or improved at Sidrabene:

Responses to this question were offered by approximately 125 responders excluding those who said that nothing needed to be changed.

The primary themes related to the operation of the children’s camp (included in section 3b above), maintenance of Latvian language and culture, facilities, and information sharing. Many comments about the types of activities responders would like to see and safety/controlled access issues have already been covered in earlier sections and are not repeated here.

Latvian language and culture

Comments about the camp needing to be more Latvian-centred were described above, as the Latvian focus is the key differentiating factor between Sidrabene’s children’s camp and other camps. The same comments were also made about Sidrabene as a whole –it is the language and culture that make the

property unique. One responder put it this way: *“As long as Latvian will be spoken in Sidrabene, it will last. Once it will become English-speaking only, we may as well sell.”*

Facilities

Many comments were made about Sidrabene’s facilities including the following recommendations:

- practise better overall proactive building maintenance
- improve and pave roads; install speedbumps
- implement better washrooms
- upgrade the kitchen in the Great Hall; insulate the main hall for winter use
- install a pool heater
- improve sleeping quarters or build a couple of upscale rental cabins that could be used by organizational renters as well as visitors
- many cottages are starting to look like shacks and should be upgraded
- set up better lighting on walkways
- plant more wildflowers in peripheral areas and improve trails through the woodlands
- update park equipment to stop injuries
- provide sand for the volleyball court
- provide more cover/shelter at the Café.

Information sharing

Many comments were made about the need to better notify people of activities in Sidrabene through social media and as well through paper formats. This theme emerged in earlier sections regarding church services, social and cultural events. For both cottagers and visitors, recommendations were made for better information about rentals (who/where/when) and inaccessible pool times so that they would know what is going on and could plan their visits accordingly. It was also suggested that better signage and a Sidrabene map at the gate would be helpful for visitors.

Other suggestions for what could be improved/done differently

- A number of responders were concerned about the openly recognizable alcoholic beverages in common areas.
- It was suggested that the criteria for cottage ownership be reviewed to make ownership more accessible to anyone of Latvian descent; many active Latvians have a history with Sidrabene and would like to become cottage owners but cannot due to the Church membership requirement.
- Some cottagers feel they are being pressured into participating in organizing events that they are not interested in.
- Members of the next generation should be invited to sit on boards and committees
- A formal Master plan should be developed.
- Newly immigrated Latvians should be encouraged to participate in Sidrabene.

- Ensure that control of Sidrabene remains with St. Andrew's church members.

11. Other Comments:

Responders were given the opportunity to provide other comments not related to the questions in the survey. A sample of responses is provided verbatim below:

- Sidrabene could/should evolve to become the "Garezers" for Canada!
- Church council should take a stronger position in closing the gap that seems to separate Sidrabene and the congregation. All 'padomes' members should make an effort to visit Sidrabene a few times a year and get to know the issues that confront the property, which is the only property that we own.
- I think Sidrabene is a precious resource, both for the Latvian community, but also for the local ecology. I'd like to see more attention paid to developing an appreciation of the property's unique natural attributes as much as the amenities we have added.
- There has been so much change at Sidrabene that I feel disconnected. Sidrabene as a place feels comfortable and I like being there, probably because it brings back childhood memories, but there are often so many unfamiliar faces that I feel as if I don't belong any more.
- 'Novēlu nepazaudēt šo vietu un turpināt turēties kopā'.
- Sidrabene's history and very purpose is tied to 'nometne'. The purpose of the grounds has always been to enable the operation of the summer camp, to provide a retreat for those looking for a place to rest, recharge, and reconnect with God, and to facilitate social events within the Latvian community. I believe that these should remain the main objectives of Sidrabene, and remain in that order of priority.
- It is important to have some places of 'refuge' to go to from time to time or to be used as a focal point. To me Sidrabene has been one of these places.
- I hope that Sidrabene will endure for my grandchildren to enjoy.
- The key to maintaining Sid's future will be keeping the younger generations engaged. Camp is great. Encourage and notify the youth groups (LNJAK, ALJA), scouts, etc. with lower fees to use the facilities for events.
- Long live Sidrabene! We have to ensure this!
- Congratulations and a sincere appreciation is extended to the many volunteers who maintain and support the operations of Sidrabene.

12. Concluding Comments:

I have not developed recommendations as I believe the survey results speak for themselves. But in summary, the most important findings of this survey are the following:

- There is a great diversity of views in the opinions that were expressed.
- Sidrabene is a place that is deeply loved by the great majority of the responders.
- At the core, Sidrabene already encompasses most of what everyone wants; responders are not looking for great changes to what they currently experience.
- The children's summer camp is viewed by all groups and ages as the most important component of Sidrabene; responders believe it should be more Latvian-centred and better promoted.
- There is a significant difference between how cottagers rate the Sidrabene experience vs. how members of St. Andrew's Church who are not cottagers rate it. This is to be expected, as had the latter group been more interested in Sidrabene, its members would have acquired cottages. Nevertheless, the differences in how Sidrabene is perceived between the two groups may pose a challenge for St. Andrew's Church 'padome' as it plans for the future.
- More than half of responders were interested in more cultural and educational events and more than half of responders were interested in courses where they could learn about Latvian cooking, arts and crafts.
- Sidrabene's facilities require significant improvements.
- While the great majority of responders understand the need to rent out Sidrabene's facilities to external users, there is a significant concern that strangers on the property may impact its future safety and the current sense of family.
- Information about events/rentals needs to be publicized more widely within the Latvian community and among cottagers.

Sylvia Shedden

September 23, 2016

Appendices

Appendix 1: The importance of Sidrabene as a religious/spiritual retreat				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	33 (15.6%)	18 (15.9%)	5 (6.1%)	14 (24.1%)
2	34 (16.1%)	17 (15.0%)	11 (13.4%)	11 (19.0%)
3	28 (13.3%)	14 (12.4%)	11 (13.4%)	10 (17.2%)
4	45 (21.3%)	27 (23.9%)	20 (24.4%)	13 (22.4%)
5	40 (19.0%)	21 (18.6%)	17 (20.7%)	8 (13.8%)
Extremely important: 6	31 (14.7%)	16 (14.2%)	18 (22.0%)	2 (3.4%)

Appendix 2: The importance of Sidrabene's children's summer camp to the Latvian-Canadian community				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	6 (2.8%)	4 (3.5%)	1 (1.2%)	3 (5.2%)
2	8 (3.8%)	5 (4.4%)	2 (2.4%)	3 (5.2%)
3	19 (9.0%)	11 (9.7%)	6 (7.3%)	6 (10.3%)
4	27 (12.8%)	16 (14.2%)	8 (9.8%)	11 (19.0%)
5	61 (28.9%)	32 (28.3%)	20 (24.4%)	16 (27.6%)
Extremely important: 6	90 (42.7%)	45 (39.8%)	45 (54.9%)	19 (32.8%)

Appendix 3: The importance of Sidrabene's children's summer camp to the responder's family				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	55 (26.1%)	32 (28.3%)	9 (11.0%)	24 (41.4%)
2	15 (7.1%)	8 (7.1%)	4 (4.9%)	4 (6.9%)
3	26 (12.3%)	13 (11.5%)	7 (8.5%)	9 (15.5%)
4	28 (13.3%)	17 (15.0%)	13 (15.9%)	7 (12.1%)
5	32 (15.2%)	16 (14.2%)	14 (17.1%)	5 (8.6%)
Extremely important: 6	55 (26.1%)	27 (23.9%)	35 (42.7%)	9 (15.5%)

Appendix 4: The importance of Sidrabene's cultural activities				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	7 (3.3%)	6 (5.3%)	1 (1.2%)	5 (8.6%)
2	7 (3.3%)	4 (3.5%)	3 (3.7%)	3 (5.2%)
3	21 (10.0%)	15 (13.3%)	7 (8.5%)	8 (13.8%)
4	52 (24.6%)	26 (23.0%)	22 (26.8%)	13 (22.4%)
5	54 (25.6%)	31 (27.4%)	23 (28.0%)	15 (25.9%)
Extremely important: 6	70 (33.2%)	31 (27.4%)	26 (31.7%)	14 (24.1%)

Appendix 5: The importance of Sidrabene's social activities				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	10 (4.7%)	7 (6.2%)	1 (1.2%)	6 (10.3%)
2	16 (7.6%)	10 (8.8%)	3 (3.7%)	7 (12.1%)
3	37 (17.5%)	22 (19.5%)	10 (12.2%)	15 (25.9%)
4	44 (20.9%)	24 (21.2%)	15 (18.3%)	13 (22.4%)
5	63 (29.9%)	32 (28.3%)	32 (39.0%)	10 (17.2%)
Extremely important: 6	41 (19.4%)	18 (15.9%)	21 (25.6%)	7 (12.1%)

Appendix 6: The importance of the availability of sports facilities				
	All	St. Andrews	Cottagers	St. Andrews non-cottagers
Not at all important: 1	17 (8.1%)	12 (10.6%)	3 (3.7%)	10 (17.2%)
2	16 (7.6%)	8 (7.1%)	1 (1.2%)	8 (13.8%)
3	25 (11.8%)	16 (14.2%)	6 (7.3%)	10 (17.2%)
4	43 (20.4%)	25 (22.1%)	18 (22.0%)	11 (19.0%)
5	53 (25.1%)	27 (23.9%)	24 (29.3%)	11 (19.0%)
Extremely important: 6	57 (27.0%)	24 (21.2%)	30 (36.6%)	8 (13.8%)

Appendix 7: What the responders like best about Sidrabene

- Coming and seeing the friends that I don't see during the winter. The activities are fun and the food is amazing.
- I like the social aspect of Sid the most. I see Sid as a place where I come to be with friends and family, some of whom I have not seen in a long time, and I can use this place as a way to reunite with people. I can also meet new people here.
- What I like best is the people because all the people in Sidrabene are so welcoming and you will always have a great time and make new friends.
- I like that there is so much space for kids to just go crazy all over Sid.
- And I also like that it is not two hand touch in games at camp.
- I like that when I come here that I can just do whatever I want without feeling frightened.
- What I like about Sidrabene is that I come back every year to my second family. Sid is extremely beautiful, fun and active and I wouldn't want to go to any other camp. The food is amazing, the activities are fun, and the people in general are amazing.
- The things that I like best about Sidrabene are that I can come here every year and still experience the same feeling of fun that I do every year. Sid isn't just a normal camp, most people here have been coming for most of their lives, that makes Sid that much better.
- I really enjoy the summer camp which I have attended for many years as a camper and now as a CIT. I enjoy taking part in community get togethers at the Café and other community activities and celebrations such as Jāņi. I really enjoy the positive atmosphere at Sidrabene and between members of the community and cottagers. I also enjoy seeing people I know and getting to meet up with them and take part in activities with my friends and family. Another thing I enjoy is spending time at the pool and eating at the Café.
- It is a really active camp.
- Nature, Latvian vibe, Pool/park/cottages/space, camp, Café, special activities (Jāņi, rib fest, opening...)
- The friendly staff and campers that make you feel like you're at home every year.
- Having a place that I know is safe and is private to me and the Latvian community. The surroundings capture me and make me feel like I'm on vacation.
- The thing I like best about Sidrabene is that everyone here is like one big family. Everyone knows everyone and gets along with everyone. There is hardly a time when I am at Sid that I don't see someone I enjoy talking to. I also like the fact that Sid brings me closer to nature. I like the fact that people here aren't always on their phones and electronics, and get to spend time with each other.
- Clean air and fun people.
- Pool, Cafe, outdoor activities, camp, Latvians.
- Coming to Jāņi, camping out with friends, drinking and relaxing.
- Little piece of heaven on earth. A great escape from the craziness of the city.
- The location is great.
- I like that Sid is a place where I can chill with friends and just hang out. Sid is also home to the best camp in the world Sidrabene.
- Sidrabene feels very safe but very lively at the same time.
- Tā kopības sajūta. Noteikti tas, ka visi turās tik ļoti kopā un novertē to. Mēs nākam no tik mazas un nabadzīgas valsts un tas ir ļoti svarīgi, ka tik tālu no Latvijas cilvēki spēj tureties kopā un saglabāt kultūru, valodu un vērtības.
- Quiet, peaceful, nature, playground/pool/splash pad.
- Peaceful walks, memories as a kid, time to explore and meet with family and friends.
- The property: the river, old spaces like brīvdabas baznīca, danču grīda, the proximity to the escarpment and hikes in the area.
- It is such a welcoming place where everyone is included in the community. I love to be part of the social and cultural events

or just with family enjoying the peaceful scenery. It is the perfect getaway from the city but close enough to come often.

-I like the community the best. It is a place to gather with friends and family. I like the activities and church services that bring us together.

-Quiet place to relax in the country on weekends. St. John's night is a blast too.

-I like that it's still pretty secluded, even though the "city" is slowly moving closer.

-It's an excellent place to relax and retreat to, to get away from the city, while still being close to amenities when needed. The welcoming community atmosphere means that there's nearly always something to do or someone to talk to.

-I like being outdoors in a safe and community oriented place.

-Kids' camp.

-I enjoy the community and sharing a facility with cottages and activities with friends and family.

-I love the community and the people that I have met and grown up with. It's like an extra big family!

-Nature. Latvian. cottages. camp. church. good times!

-Nometne, songs, and the sounds of people having fun.

-I love it that's it's peaceful. I like that it's close to the city but feels like you're in the country. The children's camp is great.

-Being able to camp, the pool, the old-school playground, the tranquility and feeling of being away from the city...

-The natural setting, the feeling that members of the community are always welcome, that kids can roam freely and safely like I did as a child. Kids today don't typically get to experience freedom in a natural setting like we could in the past- Sid is a fantastic place for this. The grounds are always excellently maintained.

-The country setting.

-Great property, pool, cafe, Jāņi, camping.

-Proximity to Toronto.

-The history me and my family have there and the beautiful grounds that I've spent my entire life on.

-As a former camper, Sidrabene shaped who I became as an adult. The memories are priceless.

-The beautiful grounds, and welcoming community.

-Daba.

-Beautiful property. Enjoy camping with my family.

-What's not to like - an absolutely gorgeous natural setting with great facilities (Cafe, pool, hall). Kids love the camp. I just find it a very beautiful and relaxing place to spend time.

-Such an interesting question for a Saulainiete to answer! I prefer Saulaine in terms of natural setting but I also have my friends and comfort level there. Any event that pulls me there would have to include/encourage my friend group or my adult kids alternatively. I wouldn't stay overnight unless I was on a spiritual retreat or a special event.

-Accessibility, location.

-The serene nature.

-It's home away from home - a place to relax and meet friends.

-The people/sense of community!

-Super close to Toronto, especially because the 407 is close but not close enough to hear it!

- The continuity.
- The camp.
- Wide open spaces.
- The fact that the camp exists and has existed all these years for the Latvian community.
- Sidrabene needs to be maintained as long as possible as a (cultural) oasis for Latvians. The availability and access to the grounds is a very desirable luxury in these times of city living. It is an escape.
- The vaditāji were great this year. Especially for the little ones.
- Growing up it was my connection to the Latvian community, as I attended camp and made lifelong friends and connections. So, in part I have a sentimental attachment. Pleased to see Sid evolve as needed (e.g., getting the pool when the river was no longer a viable swimming option). I admit I don't go often, mainly at Jāņi. If I had children, I would have sent them to Sid.
- I enjoy the camaraderie and meeting old friends.
- Trees, hidden away quiet place and quiet places at Sid. Or, if you are looking for a party/people - that is available as well.
- The summer camp and Jāņi celebration.
- Jāņi festivities.
- Good investment.
- It is a great and well-run place. The congregation should be encouraged to enjoy its property. Keep renting it out for income and cottagers should contribute reasonable and fair communal fees for their seasonal access. Don't be shy to make it appear more Christian or Latvian.
- It's an oasis in the middle of the GTA, such a lovely spot to rest from city life!
- Park-like setting, open fields, nature paths,
- It's a great outdoor space that kids absolutely love. Great summer camp and great space for the Latvian scouts and guides.
- Latvian heritage.
- A Latvian retreat close to the city.
- The nature.
- It's close, easy to get to and yet a place away from the city where we can all come together. Nature... pool... community.
- Privacy, nature, river, social activities.
- I enjoy the peacefulness, sense of community and all of the fun activities put on by the camp and cottagers. It is truly one large family. I feel that my kids can run around safely and give them more freedom at Sidrabene than anywhere to explore and have fun in nature.
- The close location to home.
- The nature and quiet, the river, Jāņi festivities, the people.
- Plašais laukums, strautiņš, peldbaseins, brīvdabas baznīca.
- The fellowship of Latvians that meet.
- General peace and quiet outside of large events. Natural setting.
- The surroundings and having the opportunity to meet up with friends.
- Lovely property and great place to relax among Latvian speaking people.

-Being in a place where I can be comfortable with my Latvian identity - this means hearing the language spoken, signs on the property in Latvian (not just English as now).

-Nature; peacefulness, spirituality, safety, community, fellowship, "family".

-Privacy.

-Community feeling, friendships, Latvian culture, nature.

-Sidrabene has a well-kept property and very Latvian "feel" to it.

-Get to enjoy God's creation everyday I'm here.

-Beautiful property, care-free and relaxed feeling.

-The strong sense of community that is present there.

-That it is a comfortable familiar space which brings back childhood memories.

-A lovely meeting space for individuals and guests who ascribe to a Latvian cultural heritage or take interest in the activities that are offered at Sidrabene.

-Community, pool, escape.

-The open fields, park like setting so close to the city.

-It's my home away from home

-The trees, the river and the mix of natural and cultivated areas. More meadow land to encourage wild flowers the way they do it in Latvia. Wild flowers are an essential part of Jāņi celebrations!

-Its isolation from the city hustle.

-Nice to have a Latvian focused place, spent many years there in my youth (in camps as a kid and just hanging out with friends later on).

-Close to Toronto.

-A cultural meeting spot and a place for children to play and make friends with other like-minded people.

-Location.

-Jāņi.

-The feeling of community and fellowship.

-Close to metro Toronto; assembly of Latvians, and friends, a place to meet; gives children a healthy dose of Latvian culture; a place for city dwellers who have no cottage to experience the outdoors on weekends.

-The people who go regularly.

-Sidrabene is a hub at which Latvians and friends can meet to pass a leisurely day and be free to enjoy nature, relaxing and socializing. I cannot imagine Sidrabene not existing.

-Its natural setting and opportunity to cool off in the pool in the summer. The Café and the interesting social activities which have been happening at Sid.

It is a natural retreat that allows people to enjoy God's wonders so close to the city.

-Close to the city, where I can go, relax and unwind. Safe area for kids to play and run around.

-Nature, serenity, friends, social activities, Cafe, pool, our cottage.

-Located near Toronto, green & well-kept grounds, good choice of activities, Cafe dining.

-The natural woodlands around the perimeter of the property contrasting with the open meadows of the interior. I also love the peace of the Bronte Creek riverside. I think the native plant material at Sid is underappreciated, and has been overrun in certain areas by introduced ground covers which should be used more sparingly and with an awareness of their impact.

-When it is peaceful and quiet.

-It is a soothing 'natural' oasis in very close proximity to Toronto & the GTA where the 'critical mass' of the Latvian/Canadian community still exists.

-Sense of community and fellowship.

-The peace and quiet, and seeing friends & family.

-It is Latvian.

-A terrific place to hold outdoor Latvian activities such as the children's summer camp (and camp for the Latvian girl guides and scouts) and Jāņi.

-Continuation of Latvian culture in the generations to come.

-It's close to the city, nature, pool, a place to meet other Latvians and socialize, watching performances.

-It has a comfortable feel about it. People look out for each other and the property as a whole. It is isolated but close to major arteries. It has incredible potential. Valdis Kaulins is doing a super job - can't imagine anyone doing it better.

-That it's Latvian and close to Toronto and that it is part of our community's collective history.

-Peaceful, welcoming, always good company, the pool, the Cafe, celebrations - Jāņi the children's camp, opportunities to work for teenagers, the outdoor church. The grounds are always well kept, clean, a relatively short drive from the city.

-Bērnu nometne un aizgājuša jaunība Sidrabenē.

-Bērnu nometne.

-Daba, miers, iespēja latviskām svinībām, iespēja būt ar latviešiem.

-Sociability if one wants it.

-The beautiful woodland setting beside the river. Also enjoy the pools, the Cafe, the Latvian atmosphere - it's like a little Latvian village, in the summertime especially.

-Close to Hamilton/Toronto; geographic sense of "enclosure" - off of the main road and only one road leading "in"; central field mostly surrounded by cottages - feeling of safety for children "running free" ; owned cottages encourage a feeling of shared responsibility and pride of ownership.

-It's near Hamilton. Peaceful spot (except at Jāņi).

-I like the mix of public spaces plus private cottages... feels like a village!

-Daba, cilvēki, dvēseles miers.

-Sabiedrīks centrs satikt latviešus vai citus kuriem ir kopīgas intereses piem. uzturēt latviešu kultūru.

-I love our cottage, the birds, the quiet, the trees, the other cottagers who are so friendly. The custodian, Andy, couldn't be nicer or more helpful; he is a hard worker and we are so blessed to have him.

-Proximity and access, simply to get out of the city; availability of pool and sports facilities; to simply be able to walk about peacefully.

-The pool in the summer. Like the bocce, horseshoes, the social aspect.

-Meeting Latvian friends.

-The beautiful property. I have come to Sidrabene since it began. Memories!

-Meeting friends at Jāņi; visiting at a friend's cottage; perfect for 3x3, I loved it. Great venue for pre-Dziesmu svētki events and practices. I like that Sidrabene is accessible, not too far to get to, much closer than Toronto! The layout is good with the main hall, Cafe and pool centrally located. Good that there is a playground, sports courts, the river, the two stages, there is a place for everything. And well maintained. Always a friendly face at the gate.

- It is an oasis from the busy and fast pace world. The summer camp for children is excellent. As a grandparent it is the one place I bring my grandchildren so that they meet other children of Latvian heritage, hear the spoken language from others not just me...play, sing, do crafts, learn about God and Jesus which reinforces what they have learned at school (separate school board).

-A beautiful place to wander about no comfortable places for rest.

-Its location and nature.

-The greenery and fresh air.

-Zaļais darzs, kafejnīca, Jāņi, baznīca.

-Skaista daba, latviešu sabiedrība, maltītes kafejnicā.

-Visa Sidrabene.

-Visa Sidrabene.